SPAWN®

THE DARK AGES

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6 OF 6 MAY

DIGITAL EDITION

COVER A

SHARP

SPAWN®
THE DARK AGES

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PREVIOUSLY IN *SPAWN: THE DARK AGES*

Aurelianus and Ulegrave enter into the final battle for the soul of the Briton kingdom. A battle that may end their time together, forever!

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YOU SLEEP, MY KING. YOU DREAM.

BUT I RESIDE WITH YOU, TIED AS SURELY AS THE TIDE TO THE SHORE, THE MIST TO THE SEA.

AND YET, YOU MUST RELEASE ME. LET ME FADE LIKE A SUMMER'S DAY, SENSED IN WARM REVERY, AND SCENT.

AND THOUGH I LEAVE YOU, KNOW MY LOVE SHALL STAY STEADFAST AS THE MOON AND ALL THE STARS.

BUT EARTHLY THINGS YET REMAIN TO BE DONE!

SO, I ASK, DO THIS FOR ME, MY LOVE, MY KING:

DRAW THE SAXONS INTO LONDINIUM TO DO BATTLE, AND THEREAFTER GIFT THOSE LANDS TO THE ERLKING ULEGRAVE.

LET HIM RULE AS THE KING IN THE EAST, SO THAT HE SHALL NO LONGER BE A SHADOW MONARCH OF THE DAMNED...

LONDINIUM.
AUTUMN, 480AD
"DO THIS, SO YOU CAN PROMISE HIM HIS OWN KINGDOM..."

"AND YOU MUST THEN BE ***UNITED*** IN BATTLE ONE LAST TIME, AURELIANUS.

"FOR LOVE OF ME.

"FOR LOVE OF DANU...

"...AND ABOVE ALL, FOR THE VERY *FUTURE* OF THE KINGDOM OF THE BRITONS!"

KNEEL, PRIEST!

AVAST, I SAY THEE!

GOOD LORD AND KING, HORSA! ***SIRE!***

HEAR ME THIS DAY...

SILENCE!

CAN YOU HELP ME TURN THE BATTLE, KENTIGERN?

WE'RE ***BEING*** SLAUGHTERED!

AYE!

AYE, THRICE, AYE!

DO AS I BID, AND ***REPENT,*** GOOD KING!

STEP OUT AS THE RIGHTFUL ***CHRISTIAN*** KING, WITH ME AT YOUR SIDE, AND THE TIDE WILL SURELY TURN!

AS SOON AS THEY SEE A KING WITH ALMIGHTY ***GOD*** ON HIS SIDE, AND NOT THE VILE ***DEOFOL*** IN WHOSE PARLANCE AURELIANUS RESIDES, THE PEOPLE SHALL FLOCK TO YOU!

HM.

I'VE HEARD ALL THIS BEFORE, PRIEST.

AND SO... I THINK NOT.

MY LIEGE?

I HAVE TAKEN *OTHER* COUNCIL.

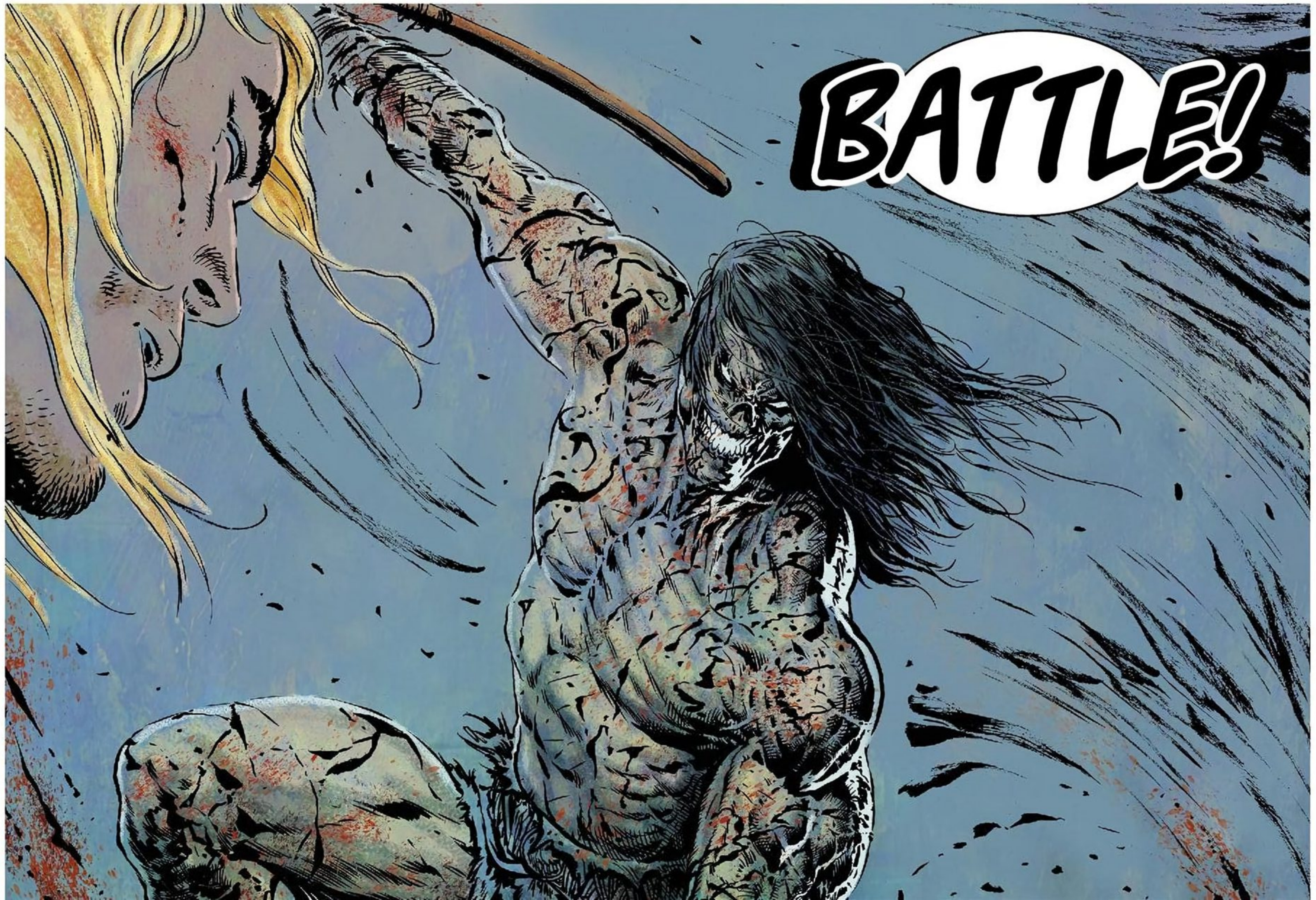
THINK YOU, I KNEW NOT WHAT YOU HAVE *DONE?*

SHANK

I HOPE YOU PAY MOST GRAVELY FOR IT IN THE FIRES OF YOUR BELIEF'S MOST GRIM KINGDOM!

GO, CHILD OF MY HEART.

READY YOURSELF. AND SO WILL I. FOR WE BOTH MUST PREPARE FOR...


BATTLE!

ARE YOU READY, KING HORSA?

TO MAKE AN END OF THIS?

AYE.

MY HONOUR SHALL BE SATED IN TRYST WITH THIS KING.

THOUGH THE BATTLE BE LOST, YOUR MEN HAVE FOUGHT WELL, SIRE.

IT'S WITH YOU, NOW, TO MAKE GOOD THE ***BARGAIN*** YOU PLIED, THE BITTEREST A FATHER MAY MAKE...

A BONDMAID SHE'LL BE, AND ANOTHER SMALL ***DEATH*** THERE'LL BE FOR ME IN THAT.

THIS OLD MAN'S HEART LIES CLEAVED AND ASUNDER.

BUT ENOUGH! IT'S TIME TO KILL ***OR*** BE KILLED.

YOU HAVE CHOSEN WISELY.

THIS KINGDOM SHALL BE UNITED ONCE MORE, NO LONGER RUPTURED BY PREJUDICE DRIVEN BY THE AMBITIONS OF THOSE WHO'S ROBES AND ALLEGIANCES BELY THEIR ***TRUE*** NATURE.

KENTIGERN ***SOUGHT*** ONLY TO ENRICH AND EMPOWER HIMSELF.

AND WE, WHO ARE BORN TO POWER, DO ***NOT*** SO?

BUT NO MATTER. THOUGH TIRED AND DECREPIT, I STEP OUT TO DO BATTLE ONE LAST TIME THIS NIGHT OF LONG KNIVES.

SO, I BESEECH THEE...

PRAY, SEE TO IT, THAT MY DAUGHTER, ÆDIÐE, IS TREATED WELL BY YOUR KING AFTER THEY ARE WED?

GIVE ME YOUR WORD, DIVICIACUS. I MUST HAVE THAT.

"SLAUGHTER IS A TEPID FRIEND OF DARKNESS AND COLD."

"BE ASSURED, KING HORSA...

"AURELIANUS IS A MAN OF HONOUR.

"FAIR IN HIS JUDGEMENT...

"...AND KIND IN MATTERS OF THE HEARTH AND HEART.

"SHE'LL WANT FOR NAUGHT, WHEN WE ARE LONG GONE.

"I HAVE SEEN'T IN THE ECHOES OF THINGS YET UNDONE."

"I HAVE HEARD IT WHISTLED DOWN THE WINDS OF TIME.

"AND YOUR NAME, TOO, SHALL LIVE ON..."

"...FOR A ***THOUSAND YEARS*** AND MORE STILL TO COME..."

THE DAY IS WON.

AYE.

UNTIL THE DAY WHEN IT IS *NOT*.

THAT IS THE RUB, AND THE MEASURE OF SUCH THINGS.

MY LORD ERLKING YULEGRAVE, NOW KING OF THESE EASTERLY LANDS AND OF THIS ONCE GREAT CITY, I SPEAK NOT JUST AS ONE WHOSE UNLIKELY UNION HAS DELIVERED US TO NOW, BUT AS A BROTHER IN BATTLE AND LOSS--

THANK YOU, MY FRIEND, IF FRIEND I MAY CALL YOU?

HM.

"PUT A BEGGER ON A HORSE AND HE'LL RIDE IT STRAIGHT INTO THE PITS OF HELL", IT IS SAID.

MY FUTURE, AS MY PAST, IS FOREVER VEILED TO ME.

I KNOW NOT HOW LONG I MUST WANDER THROUGH THIS MURKY HALF-LIFE, NOR IF I SHALL RECALL YOU IN THE DECADES OR CENTURIES TO COME--

I HAVE BEEN TOLD I HAVE ALREADY STRODE THROUGH MANY LONG AGES OF MAN!

BUT IF SUCH A THING AS *'FRIEND'* BE SERVED IN THE SPAN OF A YEAR, AND IF IT CAN BE KNOWN AND KEPT BY OTHERS TO TELL, THEN PERHAPS ITS ECHO SHALL NEST IN ME, AND GENTLY HAUNT MY SLEEPLESS DAYS.

SO, ADIEU, FRIEND.

IF IT HAS NOT BEEN KIND, IT HAS YET, I THINK, BEEN FOR A GREATER GOOD.

WINCHESTER

BUT, HOW?...

...AS THERE IS *NO DOOR!*

THERE IS INSTEAD, NOTHING.

NOTHING HERE AT ALL...

SPAWN: The DARK AGES
The LEGEND of ERLKING ULEGRAVE

Excerpt: The Lost Book of Tells

And the Saxon princess, Ædiðe, daughter of the slain King Horsa, did wed King Aurelianus, fortifying a bond that established a thirty-year peace in the splintered kingdom of Britons, Picts, and those who would come to be known as Anglo-Saxons.

The legend of Aurelianus would itself grow, and many would cite him as the true progenitor of the stories of King Arthur. Aurelianus would sire three sons, one of whom would be murdered, while the other two became great and fierce rivals.

The old (prematurely aged?) king himself would spend his final years wandering the bountiful enclosures at Winchester Castle, hoping to find once more the gateway into a mythic garden he claimed to have seen, where statues of ancient deities moldered in archaic beauty beneath shrouds of emerald ivy.

Then, one late summer eve, as the last rays dappled the flinty cobbled walls of the old Romanesque estate, it was reported that Aurelianus, enfeebled and bowed beneath the crush of a stubborn, debilitating illness, bade his retainers escort him once more outside, there to rest as the sun set. And he had them lay him gently within an arbor upon a stately dais, cushioned with delicately scented rose petals, where he then requested that he should be left alone.

But on returning, the retainers found the dais quite deserted, the petals scattered to the winds. And look as they might, neither hair nor whisker of the old king was ever found.

As for King Erlking Yulegrave, now that is another story...

SPAWN CROSSOVER GEIGER
RECKLESS EAST OF WEST I KILL GIANTS
THE WALKING DEAD I HATE FAIRYLAND
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH SEX CRIMINALS
KILLADELPHIA BATTLE CHASERS
SAVAGE DRAGON
PRETTY DEADLY BLACK SCIENCE THE WICKED + THE DIVINE
MONSTRESS CHEW SWEET PAPRIKA
GIDEON FALLS
MOONSTRUCK UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY SKYWARD OBLIVION SONG
DESCENDER PAPER GIRLS THE OLD GUARD
INVINCIBLE WANTED BITTER ROOT
STRAY DOGS WHAT'S THE FURTHEST PLACE FROM HERE SNOTGIRL
SAGA KICK-ASS WITCHBLADE ISOLA
INKBLOT
GOD COUNTRY CRIMINAL
FIRE POWER NOCTERRA DIE
HAPPY!
JUPITER'S LEGACY
LITTLE BIRD RAT QUEENS
RADIANT BLACK
ICE CREAM MAN DECORUM BITCH PLANET
DEADLY CLASS MIDDLEWEST

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